CHAPTER-I

PRESENT STUDY

1.1 NEED FOR THE STUDY

It is a matter of common knowledge that Indian economy is rural-based and 76.27% of its population resides in the rural areas. Agriculture continues to dominate as the most important economic activity of the rural population in India.

Agriculture in India is not merely an occupation or a business profession for the people, but a tradition, a way of life which for centuries has shaped their thoughts, outlook and culture. Agriculture dominates the country's economy to such an extent that about 70% population is dependent on it. Agricultural statistics reveal that out of the total area, 46.89% land is under effective cultivation. Considering cultivable land available, pressure on the demand for foodgrains is very high, because the population growth of 25% has outstripped the rate of increase in agricultural production which is 20.75%. Thus the limited available cultivated land has to meet the demands of a rapidly increasing population for foodgrains production.
This implies agriculture has a great scope for improvement in India and to improve agricultural production, there is an ever increasing need for the latest information, because information is considered a resource, an essential input like other agricultural inputs. Knowledge is essential for the progress of agriculture and higher national agricultural output. It is apparent that the right kind of information is a key to solve the various types of problems faced by the farmer. It may be supplied by a library and/or agricultural agencies.

Hence, there should be close interaction among public libraries, agricultural research institutes, Village level workers connected with agricultural extension service and mass media. Unless they have a close contact among the various agencies, it would not be possible to solve the farmers' problems. In view of this, the present study has undertaken to identify the extent of involvement of public libraries in solving the problem of transferring agricultural information to cater to the farmers' general and specific needs. It is also intended to explore the communication mediums that are being used in this matter and their effectiveness. Nobody appears to have done any extensive research in this field. Thus the need for the study and its focus on effective integration of the public library network with other communication channels as well as the role of each medium.
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"Information Use and Transfer Among the Indian Farmers: A Study of Role of Communication Media With Special Reference to Karnataka"

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study encompasses the role of rural libraries in meeting the information needs of farmers, particularly in Karnataka state. An attempt has here been made to study in (1) the relationship between farmers, librarians and village level workers in the adoption of agricultural practices, (2) the forms of different communication media such as print media, non-print media and personal contact, used as a source of information regarding agricultural practices, and (3) The personal and group contacts such as with village level worker, agricultural extension officers, and in Kisan melas, group discussion with friends, neighbours, relatives etc.

1.4 OBJECTIVES:

The primary objectives of the study are to identify the role of communication media, information use and transfer among Indian farmers. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to identify the:
i) use of library resources and services;

ii) information interests/needs;

iii) availability and usefulness of different communication media;

iv) the role of different communication media as a source of information channel for transfer of innovative technology, fertilizers and pesticides, irrigation and marketing information among the Indian farmers with special reference to Karnataka state; and

v) to suggest suitable techniques, materials and instruments of library services to overcome the existing problems.

1.5 HYPOTHESES:

Any scientific investigation starts with the statement of a problem - followed by a tentative generalization in the form of a proposition i.e. hypothesis. Thus, in the present study it was felt essential to formulate the following hypotheses. These are formulated on the basis of scanning of literature and through personal experience of the researcher. The hypotheses are:

1) Use of library resources and services among the Indian farmers is very poor.

2) Indian farmers depend for their information more on informal channels than on formal channels.
iii) The different communication media as sources of information and channels for information transfer are very important from the point of view of Indian farmers.

1.6 SAMPLING STRATEGY:

The whole area of Karnataka for the above purpose was divided into ten zones. These zones are as created by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore on the basis of climatic condition, rainfall and soil. From each zone, two villages were selected randomly in which there were library facilities. Fifty farmers were selected from each of the twenty villages, from ten zones. Hence, a total sample of 1000 farmers were considered for the study.

1.7 VILLAGE SELECTION:

The Karnataka Public Library Act was enacted in 1965 in order to promote the library services to the common man. The details of types of libraries are mentioned in Chapter 3. For the purpose of this study the libraries situated in rural areas are selected keeping in view of the following specific criteria.

1. The village should have a library and communication facility.
2. The size of the village population should be around 1000, so that it helps the researcher to have a face-to-face interaction with the people and facilitates to observe them as closely as possible.

3. The village should be within a radius of 40 km away from an urban centre.

1.8 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The method chosen for collecting the required data from librarians and farmers of different levels. Questionnaire and interview methods are used to elicit data from the respondents. Two different types of questionnaires were designed for collecting necessary information from the librarians and the farmers. Questionnaire A (Appendix - I) was designed to collect information from the librarians, and questionnaire B (Appendix - II) from the farmers.

1.8.1 Questionnaire A:

This questionnaire was developed for collecting the library information in respect of collection, services, staff, salary, building etc. Informally a detailed discussion was held with librarian for knowing the actual situation of the above mentioned aspects.
1.8.2 Questionnaire B:

The detailed questionnaire was first prepared in English and was later translated into Kannada to facilitate its comprehension by the rural community. The English language questionnaire was given to a very small percentage of respondents viz., highly educated persons and to those who lived in border areas and those who had migrated from other states. The questionnaire was framed to collect the maximum possible information on the following aspects:

1. Occupational background and income,
2. Village library information in respect of collection and services,
3. Communication medias,
4. State Agriculture Department Agencies, and
5. Literate and illiterate respondents.

During interviewing each sample all aspects of the agricultural activities were taken into consideration and then assessed by the investigator. The reason for adopting this method was to place heavy reliance on the subject. Further the questionnaire cannot be made too lengthy to cover all behavioural and other aspects. In the interview, since the interviewer and the person to be interviewed are both present face to face as the questions are asked and answered, there is an opportunity for greater flexibility in eliciting information. In addition the investigator took pains to observe both the subject and his daily activities.
1.8.3 Procedure for data collection:

The field trips for investigation were planned as economically as possible. Hence villages were selected within the radius of approximately 40 kms of its district head quarters. The village also had to have a reasonably good library.

The sample villages are scattered all over Karnataka. It was felt that a team of at least two or more persons would be helpful from various points of view in interviewing and collecting data. First, the investigation involved a great deal of travelling in all types of areas and in interior parts of the state. Sometimes the village was not accessible due to non-availability of public transport facility. So at times it was a problem for a single person to carry out investigation in such areas. So a single individual would not be able to cover them properly and adequately. Second, a group of persons studying a case together could get more reliable and follow information than a single person. In villages when stranger enters, a big crowd gathers around him and more so, if he has to conduct an interview. In such circumstances, a single person cannot take cognizance of all the events happening around him or make notes of everything. In addition, he has to interview a number of informants and also observe their non-verbal behaviors in order to see if their testimony adequately corresponds to their expressions or not.
No prior notice of the investigator's visit was given to the persons to be interviewed except to the village librarian, although this was a little chancy and time-consuming process. It was chancy in the sense that sometimes the persons would not be at home if they did not know about the visit of the investigator. On the other hand, this policy was thought to be more fruitful because if the different respondents had no prior knowledge of the investigator's visit, they would not think of comparing notes and preparing for the interview. Also those who would like to avoid meeting the investigators would not get an opportunity to do so. On reaching the spot, an effort was made to interview the informants separately so that they would not get a chance to influence each other's testimony, intrude on each other's memories or harmonize their narrations falsely.

Equal importance was placed on the observation of the non-verbal behaviour of the witnesses and the subjects as they communicated various details. Observation of the non-verbal behaviour proved useful in establishing the reliability of the witnesses and it also gave clues to the corresponding emotions related to the events narrated by the subjects. All this exercise proved helpful in establishing the validity and reliability of the information furnished. Methods of cross-questioning were used to verify their statements.
In addition to this, the interview method was supplemented by long and detailed discussions with progressive farmers, panchayat members, influential village leaders, pesticide dealers, shop keepers, etc. who have remarkable knowledge about the community. They talked freely about the problems of the village and different groups of the people in the village. The interviewers also collected opinions of illiterate farmers. This information is helpful in giving an alround understanding of the village community. Informal interviews were also conducted with the State Government officers, such as Gramasevakas and Panchayat secretaries. Detailed notes were taken at these meetings and discussions.

1.8.4 PRESENTATION OF DATA:

The data were tabulated and analysed manually. The related results are given in fifth and sixth chapters. The fifth chapter contains 8 tables and the sixth consists of 58 tables.

1.9 CHAPTERIZATION

The study is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the need for the study, scope of the study, objectives, hypotheses, sampling strategy, village selection, method of data collection, procedure for data collection, presentation of data and chapterisation. The
second chapter deals with Indian farmers. The third chapter covers the information use and transfer. The review of literature is given in the fourth chapter, while the rural libraries in Karnataka is dealt with in fifth. The analysis of data are given in sixth chapter, followed by findings, suggestions, conclusion and suggestion for further research in the seventh.
REFERENCES:


2. India 1990: A Reference Annual p.383

3. Ibid. p.7.

4. Ibid. p.383.